United Nations TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/40

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General
14 February 2018

Original: English

Trade and Development Board
Trade and Development Commission
Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development
Tenth session
Geneva, 25 and 26 April 2018
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Provisional agenda and annotations

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets
4. Diversification and value addition
5. Adoption of the report of the meeting

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1
Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the multi-year expert meeting elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the tenth session of the multi-year expert meeting is reproduced in chapter I above. The topics for this session were approved at the meeting of the Extended Bureau of the Trade and Development Board on 22 November 2017. The meeting will have two days, 25 and 26 April 2018, to complete its work. The provisional schedule of meetings for the two days is attached in the annex to this document. A detailed programme will be available at the latest one week before the start of the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/40 Provisional agenda and annotations

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Item 3
Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets

3. The purpose of the multi-year expert meeting is to monitor the developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets, giving due attention to those commodity sectors that are relevant to commodity-dependent developing countries. Discussion on these topics, which will include presentations by national experts and experts from relevant international organizations and commodity bodies, as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society, will serve to inform States members of UNCTAD of important developments in key commodity sectors and markets from a development perspective.

4. To facilitate the discussion, the secretariat has prepared a background note entitled "Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets". The note reviews recent developments in key commodity markets and analyses the factors that contributed to the trends in commodity prices observed in 2017. In general, there was a slight recovery in commodity prices, pulled by the prices of minerals, ores and metals. The note explores some policy issues related to the recent developments in global commodity markets and suggests recommendations that could help commodity-dependent developing countries reduce the socioeconomic effects of commodity price volatility and achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/41 Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets

Item 4
Diversification and value addition

5. About 60 per cent of all developing countries derive at least 60 per cent of their merchandise export earnings from primary commodities, with a large majority of countries within this group dependent on the export of one or two key commodities. The concentration of export earnings on a limited number of commodities exposes exporters to the vagaries of global commodity markets. In addition to unfavourable secular terms of trade for commodity-dependent developing countries, high commodity price volatility has traditionally led to macroeconomic instability, unstable currencies and even political instability. In this context, adding value to commodities already produced, and diversifying away from the commodity sector, have been suggested as the best ways to address most of the challenges associated with commodity dependence.

6. The tenth session of the multi-year expert meeting will explore the following issues: evaluating the extent of the effect of commodity price volatility on commodity-dependent developing countries; assessing the state of export concentration in these countries, with a view to identifying the main challenges to diversification and value addition; and discussing the horizontal and targeted policies needed to foster economic and export diversification, either by widening the export basket or through adding value to existing commodities in both agricultural and extractive industries, with a view to allowing countries to take full advantage of their natural resource wealth for the benefit of their populations. In order to inform policy options for export diversification and value addition, different experiences and lessons learned will be shared.

7. To facilitate the discussion, the secretariat has prepared a background note entitled "Diversification and value addition". The note reviews the challenges associated with dependence on a narrow range of commodities, often only one or two, in particular the negative effect of commodity price volatility on commodity-dependent developing countries. The note provides policy suggestions that could help commodity-dependent developing countries diversify their economies and exports, an outcome that would help them achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/42 Diversification and value addition

Item 5
Adoption of the report of the meeting

8. The report of the multi-year expert meeting will be submitted to the Trade and Development Commission at its next session. The meeting may wish to authorize the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Input from experts: Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets

Experts nominated by member States are encouraged to submit brief papers (of approximately five pages) as contributions to the work of the multi-year expert meeting. The papers should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting and will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. Papers, which should draw on the experts' experiences, may address one or more of the following issues:

(a) What have the drivers of price trends been in recent years in commodity markets, and what are the opportunities and challenges faced by commodity-dependent developing countries stemming from these trends?

(b) How can trade in primary commodities make a positive contribution to development?

(c) What mechanisms allow primary commodities to enhance trade and contribute to sustainable development?

(d) What policy options do commodity-dependent developing countries have to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030?

For more information, please contact:

Janvier Nkurunziza
Officer-in-Charge, Special Unit on Commodities
UNCTAD
E9018, Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Tel: 41 22 917 4546
Fax: 41 22 917 0509
Email: janvier.nkurunziza@unctad.org

Annex

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development, tenth session: Provisional schedule

Wednesday *25 April 2018*	*Thursday* *26 April 2018*
(10 a.m.–1 p.m.)	*(10 a.m.–1 p.m.)*
Opening plenary Opening statements Item 1 Election of officers Item 2 Adoption of the agenda and organization of work Item 3 Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets • Agricultural commodities • Minerals, ores and metals • Energy: Oil, gas, coal and renewable energy	Item 4 Diversification and value addition
(3 p.m.–6 p.m.)	*(3 p.m.–5.30 p.m.)*
Item 3 (continued) Recent developments, challenges and opportunities in commodity markets	Item 4 (continued) Diversification and value addition
	(5.30 p.m.–6 p.m.)
	Item 5 Adoption of the report of the meeting